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# METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR APPLYING DRY TOPPINGS TO BAKED GOODS

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to food processing and more particularly to a method  
5 and apparatus for applying dry toppings, such as sesame seeds, on bakery products.

Baked goods, such as hamburger buns, are typically produced in a multi-step process that includes making the dough, placing the dough into baking pans, applying seeds or the like to the top of the dough, baking the seeded dough, and then depanning the baked goods for packaging.

10 The conventional practice within the baked goods industry is to apply seeds or other dry toppings to the dough prior to baking. It is well known that it is easier to apply seeds or other dry toppings to the sticky surface of the dough than to the drier surface of the already baked goods. Still, it has been estimated that as much as 25%-50% of the sesame seeds applied to prebaked dough are wasted in later processing steps. That is, the seeds bounce off the dough into the pan or conveyor during the application process, the seeds fall off into the oven during baking, or the seeds are pulled from the goods during the depanning process. Additionally, many seeds baked with the goods will adhere to the pans in which the goods are baked, thus making cleaning and removal difficult. A pan used to make loaves with sesame seeds one day might be used the next to make loaves topped with caraway seeds. Any remaining sesame seeds on the pan from the first day can cross-contaminate with later  
15 products. This can pose a big problem as not only will wasted seeds increase the cost of the goods and reduce the cleanliness of the bakery, but cross-contamination and increased allergens can result.

25 Accordingly, the need remains for an improved method and apparatus for addressing these drawbacks of the prior art.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

30 The method for applying dry toppings to baked goods includes the steps of pre-treating a surface of the baked goods, after baking, with an adhesive substance such as a pregelatinized wheat starch suspended in a solution and thereafter applying the dry toppings to the treated surface. Such an application has been shown to decrease wastage of such items as sesame seed topping from as much as 50% to as little as 5%.

The apparatus for carrying out the method comprises a source of starch-based solution, a source of dry topping material, a spray station for pre-treating a surface of the baked good, and